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The situation in the Middle East

Question of Palestine

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: assistance to the Palestinian people

Security Council
Sixty-fourth year

Letter dated 3 March 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to attach herewith the Conclusions by the Chair of the International Conference in Support of the Palestinian Economy for the Reconstruction of Gaza, held on 2 March 2009 in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt (see annex).

I would appreciate it if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 15, 16, 29 and 65 (c), and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Maged **Abdelaziz**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 3 March 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Conclusions by the Chair of the International Conference in Support of the Palestinian Economy for the Reconstruction of Gaza*

At the initiative of the Arab Republic of Egypt, *the International Conference in Support of the Palestinian Economy for the Reconstruction of Gaza* was convened in Sharm el-Sheikh on 2 March 2009, chaired by Egypt and co-chaired by Norway, in order to respond to the early recovery and reconstruction needs of the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip in the aftermath of Israel's military offensive.

Participants expressed their concern that an understanding on a prolonged period of calm in Gaza could not be reached till present. They expressed their support for the ongoing efforts by Egypt to consolidate the current fragile ceasefire and to establish the necessary prolonged calm. Participants underscored the importance of achieving Palestinian national reconciliation consistent with Arab League resolutions and voiced their support for the efforts exerted by Egypt to this end. They considered the achievement of both calm and the reconciliation as necessary requisites for any successful reconstruction effort undertaken by the donor community.

While participants stressed that the Gaza Strip constitutes an integral part of the Palestinian Territory occupied in 1967 on which the future Palestinian State shall be established, they reiterated that the establishment of a viable Palestinian State will require, *inter alia*, the sustained support of the international community and called for increased financial and economic assistance for the Palestinian Authority.

Many participants emphasized the importance of access for the success of recovery and reconstruction efforts. In this context, they called for the immediate, unconditional and sustained reopening of Israel's crossing with the Gaza Strip to allow for the movement of people and goods into Gaza in a manner that enables the Palestinians to effectively regain normalcy in their daily lives and rebuild what has been destroyed. Participants stressed the crucial need to break the cycle of construction and destruction in Gaza, and demanded that Israel fully respect its obligations under international law and international humanitarian law and desist from targeting or damaging the civilian and economic infrastructure of Gaza or taking any action that negatively impacts the collective livelihood of the Palestinian people in Gaza.

Participants welcomed the concerted response of the international community to the immediate humanitarian needs of the Palestinian population in Gaza that arose as a result of the military hostilities, and urged donors to continue to provide funding for these urgent priority needs, including through the United Nations consolidated appeals process. They underlined the need for this assistance to be delivered in line with the core humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and operational independence.

Participants welcomed the Palestinian National Early Recovery and Reconstruction Plan for Gaza, which represents the coordinated response of the Palestinian National Authority and its local and international partners to the destruction sustained by the Palestinians in Gaza.

They recognized that the Plan will be explicitly linked to the priorities outlined in the Palestinian Reform and Development Plan, which was launched at the December 2007 Paris donors conference. They stressed that it will form the basis for mobilizing the resources and efforts of the international community and donors in response to the needs presented by the Palestinian National Authority for 2009 and 2010.

* Also circulated under the symbol A/ES-10/450.

To this end, participants pledged an approximate total of $4,481 billion covering the next two years. They committed themselves to start disbursing these pledges as quickly as possible in order to rapidly impact the daily lives of the Palestinians.

Participants expressed their intention to channel their assistance for the Plan through the Single Treasury Account as well as through existing international and regional mechanisms and funds, namely, the European Commission's PEGASE, the World Bank Palestinian Reform and Development Plan Trust Fund, the Islamic Development Fund and the United Nations consolidated appeals process. They welcomed the European Union readiness to put the PEGASE mechanism, which provides targeted support for specific recurrent costs of the Palestinian Authority, for private-sector recovery and development of public investment, at the disposal of the international donor community.

Participants emphasized the importance of the overall coordination of the reconstruction process in order to maximize the use of pledged and existing resources and avoid the employment of assistance or duplication of efforts that do not conform to the priorities outlined by the Palestinian National Authority. In that context, they noted the important role played by the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee and highlighted the task of its upcoming meeting, which will afford major donors the opportunity to further coordinate and align their policies with Palestinian needs.

Participants expressed their hope for and encouraged Palestinians and Israelis to achieve an early resumption of serious peace talks between them with the aim of ending the occupation of the Palestinian Territory and implementing the two-State solution.

They agreed on the need to follow up on the commitments announced during the Conference.